

# A Partnership of Scientific Learning and Sharing

Isle Royale National Park welcomes a new addition to our visitor services, the Isle Royale Institute. The Institute is a cooperative program among Isle Royale National Park, Michigan Technological University (MTU), and University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD). Its goal is to promote education and research at Isle Royale National Park and on the waters of Lake Superior. Former Superintendent Douglas A. Barnard was instrumental in the early planning of this new partnership. Plans are underway for this Institute to merge with Park programs, create new programs, develop a Park home base, and support some of the Park’s research activities. This unique partnership with MTU and UMD will result in a wide range of new educational opportunities. Park visitors of all ages will have the opportunity to explore and develop a greater understanding of the intricacies of this island archipelago.

The Institute is based on successful educational programs at other National Parks. In the summer of 2002 the Institute will offer a number of educational activities ranging from short programs with natural resource researchers to multi-day courses on a number of topics. Some of these programs will be part of the public activities offered by Park personnel. For example, we will continue with the popular series of researcher presentations onboard the National Park Service vessel, *Ranger III*, as it travels to and from Isle Royale. These presentations offer the park visitor an opportunity to hear about research and other activities in the Great Lakes region and to visit with the presenters informally while travelling across Lake Superior. Research presentations cover topics such as wolf-moose interactions, loons, frogs, global warming, Lake Superior, geology, and habitat fragmentation. These presentations form the base from which the Institute is building.

Some activities offered by the Isle Royale Institute require advance reservations and a fee. A 2002 activity sample is delineated at the right. For more information contact the Institute through Isle Royale National Park. See page 2 for contact information.

Mark Gleason, Director, Isle Royale Institute



DATES	PROGRAM (open to the general public)
May 6 to 10	Leave-No-Trace Masters course (full as of this printing)
June 3 to 8	Women’s beginning Kayaking & Leave-No-Trace
June 9 to 15	Elderhostel
June 16 to 22	MTU Isle Royale Field Course
June 23 to 29	Sierra Club-Inner City Youth & Leave-No-Trace
July 6 to 13	Audubon Society trip
August 11 to 17	Leave-No-Trace-Camping for the beginning adult crowd
August 18 to 24	MTU Isle Royale Field Course
August 25 to 31	Elderhostel

## The Wolves and Moose of Isle Royale

The ongoing monitoring and re-search of the wolf and moose populations on Isle Royale - now in its 44th year of study - once again shows dramatic changes in the wolf population. In 2001 the wolf populations dropped significantly, from 29 to 19, due to an unusually high level of mortality. The high level of mortality was probably attributed to a scarcity of moose calves, a staple of the wolves’ diet, and a relatively mild, easy winter for the moose. Four wolves were live-trapped and checked for disease in the Spring of 2001, with no significant disease concerns found. We continue to believe the island’s wolf population is healthy, and know that five pups were produced in three packs in 2001.

The island remains divided into three wolf pack territories - the East Pack, Middle Pack, and a small pack in the Chippewa Harbor area. As of March 2001, the Middle Pack included six animals, the East Pack six, and the “Trio” pack three. One other duo and two loners completed the population of 19. Meanwhile, the moose population changed little, rising from 850 to about 900 animals. Moose calves made up two-thirds of the wolf kills that were field checked, keeping recruitment into the moose population relatively low. The moose population appears stable, and is expected to continue a slow rise into the future. New research has begun to examine the effectiveness of using wolf scats

from the island as a means of tracking the genetic makeup of the highly inbred wolf population. At present that information can only be gained through the live-trapping of wolves; it is hoped that scats can offer a non-invasive method of obtaining the same information. Much of the research and survey work on these populations was completed during the annual “Winter Study” in January and February of 2001 (the January/February 2002 Winter Study effort was completed too late for this printing to include the results, but these results can be purchased in the visitor centers or through the mail. See back page for ordering information). Jack Oelfke  
Branch Chief of Natural Resources

